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Remarks by Ambassador Patricia Haslach, U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia
(As Prepared for Delivery)

ETHIOPIAN COFFEE EXPORTERS CONFERENCE:
BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE COFFEE FUTURE

Monday, November 4, 2013

Sheraton Hotel, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Bunna Ewadallo!

As the new U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia, it is an honor for me to represent the U.S. Government at such a significant event. I have been informed about the goat who discovered coffee in Ethiopia, and am delighted to talk about the American contribution to ensuring that not only goats in the countryside but the entire international community can now enjoy the benefits and delight of Ethiopian coffee.

The American coffee company Starbucks is currently featuring Ethiopian coffee: Quoting Andrew Starbucks, “When we blend with Ethiopian coffees, It adds magic to a blend. It brings out different nuances – top floral notes, really rich, spicy, peppery low notes that you cannot experience in any other beans.”

Under President Obama’s \$3.5 billion Feed-the-Future Initiative, the U.S. Government is one of Ethiopia’s strongest partners in developing the agriculture sector.

As you all know, coffee plays a significant role in the national economy and the Ethiopian agriculture sector. It represents one of Ethiopia’s largest sources of foreign exchange and is essential to 15 million Ethiopians who rely on this industry for their livelihoods. Because of its centrality,

The U.S. Agency for International Development launched support to the coffee industry nearly a decade ago and our assistance increases to this day. It is widely known that Ethiopia is the origin of Arabica coffee with more than 5,000 varieties. Ethiopia exports some of the highest quality Arabica coffee in the world, offering many specialty types such as Yirgacheffe, Harar and Sidama that are distinctly Ethiopian.

With this proud history and cultural tradition, we believe that the Ethiopian coffee industry possesses tremendous potential for increased growth. In particular, the industry offers promise to millions of smallholder farmers who aspire to increase their incomes through coffee

production. In spite of this rich history and recent investments to modernize, more progress is needed to overcome constraints to increase yields, farm gate prices and export earnings.

Through USAID's Agribusiness and Market Development project, the United States is working with coffee stakeholders to expand sales of unique, traceable Ethiopian coffees to conventional and specialty international markets.

To achieve this expansion in export sales, U.S.-assistance efforts are focused on three objectives. The first is to increase productivity and improve quality through cooperatives. The second is to support the Ethiopian Commodities Exchange (ECX) to develop traceability and best practices for warehousing and quality control. The third is to expand international market opportunities for cooperatives, commercial farmers, and exporters.

Our support is beginning to show results. Last year, we facilitated the introduction of one million new coffee seedlings; helped to upgrade and certify the ECX labs to the standard of the Specialty Coffee Association of America—the first such labs in Africa; and helped achieve \$10 million in total farm-gate sales through our marketing support under the Ethiopian Fine Coffees initiative.

We also have high expectations for our future assistance. By 2016, we are striving to support our industry partners for the benefit of more than 300,000 smallholder farmers; to increase the amount of coffee sold at a premium of 20 percent; to facilitate the export of 2,000 tons of traceable coffee under the new ECX system; and facilitate increased exports of nearly \$1 billion dollars.

I am proud of the role we play, but we are but one partner in this important industry. The exchange of information and ideas during this conference will help us all better understand Ethiopia's potential and, I hope, result in new and profitable export deals.

We are confident that the Ethiopian Coffee Exporters Association will continue to grow and that the Ethiopian coffee sector will continue to thrive. The United States has been and will continue to be a committed partner in the development of Ethiopia's coffee sector through support to the Coffee Exporters Association, its private sector members and smallholders, and the Government of Ethiopia. Through this partnership, we hope to help you realize your vision to "Build a Sustainable Coffee Future" in order to increase incomes of millions of Ethiopian smallholders and thereby contribute to economic growth.

Thank you and have a great conference.